

SRIMADBHAGAVADGITA

**Summary on
Eleventh Chapter
by
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SUMMARY (ELEVENTH CHAPTER)

- Note:
1. Portions in brackets are supplied ideas.
 2. Numbers in brackets indicate the verses.

(In the previous four chapters, *Kṛṣṇa* established that the entire universe is a manifestation of God and, therefore, any glory in the creation belongs to God alone. Now, in this chapter, *Arjuna* appreciates this teaching and sees the universe as the very Lord.)

In the first two verses, *Arjuna* summarises the entire teaching of *Kṛṣṇa* — the nature of *jīva* (predominantly discussed in the first six chapters) and the nature of God (predominantly discussed in the later four chapters.) Though *Arjuna* has received the teaching, he is unable to appreciate the universal form due to some mental blocks. Hence, he prays to the Lord for the vision of the universal form of the Lord (3, 4.)

Lord *Kṛṣṇa* agrees to bless *Arjuna* with the vision of the universal form (5 to 7). Since it is not possible to have such a vision with the ordinary eyes, *Kṛṣṇa* grants *Arjuna* the divine eye for this special purpose (8). (Universal form is not a special form of the Lord. It is the Lord as the universe. As such, it is available for all at all times. The Lord need not show it. Still we miss it because of our narrow outlook of the world. Once we refine our mind and look at the universe, we cannot miss the Lord. His stamp is there in all, from a blade of grass to the farthest star. Such a mind which is tuned to see the Lord is the divine eye behind the fleshy eyes. It is such an eye that *Kṛṣṇa* granted to *Arjuna*.)

From the 9th to the 14th verse, we get a description of the universal form from *Sañjaya*. He picturises the Lord as a person with all divine ornaments shining with the brilliance of a thousand suns risen together. (We should remember that this is a description of the world only, divinised by the change of outlook. Every exalted object in the creation should be taken as an ornament of the Lord.)

SUMMARY

From the 15th verse, we get *Arjuna's* appreciation of the universal form. (*Arjuna* goes through various phases as he sees the universal form. The first response is one of wonder only.) *Arjuna* sees all beings in the cosmic body of the Lord. The sun and the moon are like his eyes. He sees the hands, legs, etc. of the people as those of the Lord. Now, the Lord's body with thousands of hands, legs, etc. appears without beginning, middle, or end (15 to 22).

Now, *Arjuna's* attention is turned towards the mouth of the Lord which represents Time (Death.) With blazing fire and protruding teeth, the Lord's mouth evokes terror in all, including *Arjuna*. *Arjuna* sees the entire world being scorched by this fire (Time,) while many are rushing towards the mouth of the Lord. Some are already inside the mouth and some are crushed between the teeth. All these cause great fear and confusion in *Arjuna* and he begins to doubt whether the Lord is a loving father or a terrible destroyer (23 to 31). (This shows that *Arjuna* is still not able to see the Lord as a whole. He is able to accept 'birth' as part of the universe, but not 'death'. This partial outlook is the cause of fear and confusion. This is the second phase.)

Then, the Lord clarifies that the fierce aspect also is Himself, manifesting as the Time-principle. When the time comes for people to die, the Lord finds the instruments to bring this about and *Arjuna* happens to be one of them in the hands of the Lord (32 to 34). Having understood the Lord to be 'the cosmic-stage-manager', *Arjuna* surrenders to His Will and sings His glory (35-45). (Now *Arjuna* appreciates the Lord as totality, the basis of creation-preservation-dissolution. In front of the Lord everything else is insignificant. This appreciation makes him a devotee, seeking forgiveness for all his past omissions and commissions. Thus, the third phase is true devotion to the Lord, born out of right understanding.)

SUMMARY

Arjuna is indeed happy to have this unique vision of the Lord. Still, one part of his mind is not able to accept the totality, especially the destructive aspect. So *Arjuna* requests the Lord to withdraw his form (46).

In the last nine verses (47 to 55), we see the Lord withdrawing His universal form (i.e. the Lord takes away the divine eye that *Arjuna* enjoyed till now. *Arjuna* comes down to look at the world in his own private way.) The Lord praises devotion as a means to this cosmic vision. This universal form could be seen by *Arjuna* because of his devotion. Through devotion one can purify the mind, see the universal form, know the true nature of the Lord, and become one with the Lord. Hence, *Kṛṣṇa* tells *Arjuna* — “Do actions for My sake; be My devotee; keep Me as the ultimate goal; be detached (from the world; be free from hatred towards all. Such a person reaches Me.”

The important topics discussed in this chapter are:

1. *Arjuna* desires to see the universal form.....1 to 4
2. *Kṛṣṇa* grants the divine eye.....5 to 8
3. *Saṅjaya*'s description of the universal form..... 9 to 14
4. *Arjuna*'s description of the universal form
(first phase expressing wonder).....15 to 22
5. *Arjuna*'s description of the universal form (second
phase expressing fear).....23 to 30
6. *Kṛṣṇa* answers *Arjuna*'s question.....31 to 34
- 7.. *Arjuna*'s description of the universal form (third
phase expressing devotion).....35 to 45
- 8.. Withdrawal of the universal form and glorification of
devotion.....46 to 55

Since this chapter deals with the universal form of the Lord, it is called *Viśvarūpadarśana-yoga*.
